



2022 STATE OF THE CITY

# YONKERS

MAYOR MIKE SPANO

MARCH 30, 2022



Good evening Council Majority Leader Diaz, Minority Leader Breen and members of the City Council, members of the Judiciary, the Board of Education Trustees, our Superintendent of Schools, State and County representatives, City commissioners and fellow Yonkers residents. I'd like to thank those watching live online, and give a special thank you to our city's first lady, my wife Mary, and our children watching from college.

One person I'd like to give special attention to this evening, is my mother, Josephine. Without her unwavering love and support, I would not be here today. Thank you, mom.

Before we begin, let's give Lincoln High School Choir and Yonkers Public Schools student Adonis Crosby another round of applause for helping us kick off this evening.

And let's also thank our city's first-ever poet laureate Golda Solomon for reciting her original poem exemplifying the spirit of Yonkers. Well done, Golda.

We gather tonight, as a city, emerging from what has been the most challenging period of our lives – a time that our grandchildren and great grandchildren will learn about in their schoolbooks. Whether personally, professionally or otherwise, we all have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and some of us continue to be. As mayor, I can tell you, it's been a time of doubt and distress, but ultimately, one of proven resilience and courage by our city. Our residents, businesses, families and students muscled through the highs and lows. But all the while, it didn't diminish our drive to move Yonkers forward.

We now are coming out of a very dark place in our history, with a new perspective. A perspective that inspires us and reignites us. I am proud tonight to tell you the State of our City is wiser, stronger and more determined than ever. We are battle-worn yet ready to forge ahead. We are Unstoppable!

We are unstoppable as we begin a new chapter. A chapter that unifies us rather than divides. A chapter that sees the fruits of our labor, the fulfillment of promises made and the blueprint for our days ahead.

No one in Yonkers has proven to be more unstoppable than the students, teachers and administrators of our Yonkers Public Schools. Over the last two years, our schools defined the word resilience. We asked, they obliged.

Thanks to the ongoing collaboration with our talented Yonkers Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Quezada, our schools opened their doors for five-days a week instruction this past September. Since then, our District distributed over 75,000 COVID-19 PCR tests, facilitated 27 vaccination sites and conducted weekly surveillance testing in every school. And over the course of the pandemic, Yonkers Schools closed the digital divide that the pandemic only highlighted, by purchasing close to 13,000 Chromebooks, laptops and iPads.

More impressive is how our students persisted during these very turbulent times. Quarantines, illness, remote learning and masks did not deter them from success. And the numbers prove it. Once again, I am proud to share that our graduation rates continue to rise. Ninety point seven percent of the Class of 2021 graduated – making Yonkers the first and only Big 5 City District in New York to accomplish such an achievement. And 52% of those graduates earned Advanced Designation diplomas. Ladies and gentlemen, in just 10 years, Yonkers Public Schools has increased its graduation rate from 72 to 90% – an increase of 18%.

Plus, of our 2021 graduates, eighty of them were admitted to Ivy League Schools or our nation's top tier colleges. Please join me in congratulating the hard working teachers, administrators and students for these amazing accomplishments.

2021 also marked the expansion of the nationally recognized My Brother's Keeper initiative. The journey paved by our men of color inspired our young women. My Sister's Keeper launched this year in 25 of our schools. Yonkers MSK promotes positive self-concept and identity development, fosters cultural pride, deepens peer bonding through sisterhood and empowers our young women to spread their wings and soar.

Tonight, many of you were escorted to your seats by some of our MBK and MSK students. I know their experiences in the program will leverage them for greater success. Together, they continue to raise the bar of our District. Please join me in congratulating our young men and women. We know they too are unstoppable!

This evening, you also may have taken notice of the new and improved auditorium here at Lincoln High School – featuring nearly \$3 million in upgrades for our students and community to enjoy. Dedicated to former Lincoln music teacher, Mrs. Josephine Caruso, this space will continue to inspire and uplift.

Thank you to the school's administration, our Board of Education and Assemblyman Sayegh for your investment and shepherding this project. Investments like these are not just to beautify but also necessary to upgrade our aging schools.

I've addressed you before about the continuing infrastructure needs of our 41 schools. Aging buildings and overcrowding were only made more evident during the last two years of the pandemic. But I am pleased to report we are finally seeing the fruits of our advocacy efforts. I was incredibly proud to recently stand alongside many of you as we broke ground on the new Justice Sonia Sotomayor Community School on McLean Avenue – the first new Yonkers Public School constructed in over 20 years.

Our local schools are the heart of our neighborhoods and should be made accessible not only for educational enrichment, but also for the benefit of the families who live there. Designed as a community school, the Justice School will feature multi-functional spaces that will be accessible evenings and weekends without the need to open the entire school. Special amenities will include a multi-purpose gymnasium and meeting room with stage; a full-sized basketball court and locker rooms as well as a cafeteria and meeting room with a full kitchen. And the addition of a health suite with space for medical and dental exam rooms will address the healthcare inequities many face. If your child does not have adequate access to healthcare services, they soon will have them here.

The Justice School is the first of its kind in our District and will be a model moving forward as we continue to rebuild our schools. I look forward to joining Dr. Quezada and our Board of Trustees in September 2023 to open the doors for the 675 students who will make this their second home. Thank you to our State Delegation, led by Majority Leader Stewart Cousins, for investing in our students' future and addressing the needs of our communities. Let's continue to Rebuild Yonkers Schools.

We are not only improving building structures, but we are also rebranding them to best represent the students who learn there. One of the goals of our schools is to provide inclusive climates that embrace diversity, promote equity and social justice. Black and brown students make up 75% of our Yonkers Public Schools. It's time to update the names of the schools to better reflect the accomplishments of the notable members in these communities. I am happy to announce that later this school year, the Yonkers Board of Ed officially will rename Palisades Prep to The Barack Obama School for Social Justice. And rename School 13 to The Mirabal Sisters Community School. These invincible, dedicated leaders who overcame great political and social strife and are symbols of what our students can become and aspire to be.



Our Yonkers Police continues to invest in our children's future as well. Working with the Yonkers Public Schools and the PAL, we are targeting at-risk kids with PEACE – a Program for External Academic Civic Engagement. Together, we are helping students under school suspension, realign themselves with their scholastic needs in order to move ahead with promotions or graduation without any learning loss.

And through the Yonkers Police Cadet program, we are engaging our youth in a way that is thought-provoking and cultivates critical thinking. Geared to young adults ages 14-18 who are interested in law enforcement, we are building more positive relationships between the PD and our city's more diverse communities. This program will help students develop life skills that go beyond law enforcement. These programs are just two of the 40+ community policing initiatives geared to seamlessly connect our officers with the community they serve.

Immersing ourselves in our neighborhoods is essential in delivering quality public safety and our Yonkers Police have made this a crucial component in fighting crime. Through the Neighborhood Stabilization Team launched last summer, we are encouraging more casual face-to-face interactions through foot patrol, and providing a sense of safety and security in neighborhoods which have recently experienced quality of life issues and violent criminal activity. The focus is to change the behavior of those who break the law, by explaining the reason for the police presence and the need for compliance. By explaining the reasons for our presence and our actions, we believe we will see an increase in trust and transparency in our Police Department. To do this right, we are INVESTING in policing and adding 10 more police officers to the roster, making it the first time Yonkers has increased its force since 9/11.

But we didn't stop there. YPD is continuing to engage in smarter precision policing, and the premise is simple. The vast majority of a community's violent crime is committed by a small number of people. They also tend to commit those crimes in a relatively small geographic area, making it possible for law enforcement to predict hot spots of criminal activity. The approach is all data driven. We analyze data and use intelligence to track and investigate violent criminals and focus attention on specific offenders at specific locations. We are fighting crime with a surgical knife rather than a chainsaw.

This approach is quickly seeing results. Unlike the spike in crime seen across the nation, Yonkers is bucking the trend. Crime in Yonkers is down 10% since this time last year. And not only are we one of the top safest cities in America, but we are the safest Big City in all of New York State. But probably the most impressive stat to share with you is we are down a remarkable 44% in crime since we took office 10 years ago.

Our police department is also diversifying its presence in our neighborhoods. Last year, I told you how we invested in our recruitment efforts to develop a more diverse pool of candidates for the next generation of Yonkers police officers. I am happy to report that 56% of those who qualify to be hired, self-identified as minority for the 2021 test. And of those who took our specialized test prep class, "Be the Change," 58% of them scored well enough to be hired in the coming years.

But we didn't stop there. In anticipation for the next phase of the test, "Be the Change" added a weekly agility class to help prepare students taking the physical exam. This new strategy in our recruitment is already seeing a return on its investment. Good luck to our future police officers. Thank you for stepping up to the challenge and "being the change!"



We also have a more transparent department than ever before. Starting today, residents now have the opportunity to check in on any law enforcement activity in Yonkers. Now anyone can track crime activity, anywhere in the city, at any given time. You can map activity, provide or view crime tips and even submit digital evidence. Fighting crime is not just about the men and women in blue – it's also about joining forces with the community it serves so it can be done better.

Improving public safety also means our first responders are in lock step in how they respond to emergencies. Led by the Yonkers Fire Department, our first responders will soon operate a joint Fire and Police Training Facility in Yonkers which will enable multiple agencies to coordinate and train together. This facility will consist of a 100 by 100 foot cityscape building, a training tower, extrication pad and a classroom building. This will enable Emergency Services Personnel to perform this training locally and on a regular basis. Special thanks to State Senator Shelley Mayer and the Denis Leary Foundation for helping make this a reality.

Along with Empress Ambulance and countless Yonkers frontline workers, let's be sure to thank all our first responders who routinely risk their lives for us each day.

Yonkers is unstoppable when it comes to enhancing the quality of life for our residents. The pandemic changed our way of life, including our growing desire to enjoy the outdoors. Thanks to the Yonkers Parks department, we have invested in green spaces across the city to make our parks more accessible and more practical in use. Over the last year, we are seeing improvements at Boo Wilson, Columbus, Lohrfink and Coyne Parks.

And keeping healthy and fit doesn't mean you need a high-priced gym membership. We've already invested \$250,000 for the creation of additional state of the art fitness centers. In two years' time, Yonkers will be home to a total of ten fitness parks across the city.

And for the runners out there, be sure to lace up those sneakers because our historic Yonkers Marathon will return this fall. Watch out – it's already being billed as the Race of the Season.

The expansion of our parks includes regaining access to our most precious asset, the Hudson River. Negotiations with the property site owner at the Ludlow bus depot are going well as we are in the early stages in designing a new waterfront park. This will mark the largest expansion of our parks system in decades.

We also are investing in a long-abandoned city lot at the old Boyce Thompson site that was once overrun with illegal dumping. We soon will remediate the lot and create a much-needed athletic field overlooking the Hudson River.

Perhaps the most innovative addition to our parks system will come later this year when we open Yonkers' first-ever sensory garden at Grant Park. Working with the Mayor's Disability Advisory Board and the Westchester School for Special Children, we will incorporate basil, lavender, sage and lotus to heighten our senses with the touch, feel and smell of a garden. Even better is that this park will be accessible for all. It literally will be a place for us to stop and smell the roses!

The park that continually instills us with the most pride is Untermyer Gardens. Renovations on the majestic Temple of the Sky were completed, restoring it to its former glory. The Untermyer Performing Arts Council presented WorldFest 2021 with great success. In fact, word is spreading about the reinvestments in our historic park. The Gardens welcomed over 100,000 visitors in 2021. Congrats to UPAC and the Conservancy for spearheading this amazing transformation.

Transforming open space in our city has become a hallmark for us. This summer will mark the 10-year anniversary of the opening of Yonkers' first daylighted park and the first in New York State. Since 2012, the City has daylighted three portions of the Saw Mill River, which reclaimed nearly four acres of public and private properties and transformed them into open, green urban spaces. And I am happy to share that we are in the early stages of developing plans for daylighting IV – extending past Chicken Island towards School St. These award-winning parks have become the template on how to revitalize urban centers, reverse negative environmental impacts and create rejuvenated business, recreational and residential districts.

The City also continues to design the Yonkers Greenway, which will create a 3.1 mile recreation trail through Southwest Yonkers. The trail will run along City streets from the Bronx border to the downtown train station, including bike lanes on the entire South Broadway arterial.

The City, in cooperation with the South Broadway BID, has recently expanded the scope of the Yonkers Greenway to include streetscaping along the corridor. The improvements will include new sidewalks and road paving, decorative lighting, more trees and an overall enhancement to this vital commercial strip.

Nothing can stop Yonkers when it comes to protecting our natural resources and our environment. We are doubling down on our efforts – from increasing our electric vehicle fleet to establishing Monarch Butterfly Habitat Preserves at local parks.

We are committed to this cause more than ever. In fact, this month we are beginning our work on the city's first-ever Climate Action Plan which will place Yonkers on the path toward zero-emissions and strengthen its resiliency against climate change. But we need your help to get this done.

Starting this spring, residents will have the opportunity to increase the city's already remarkable recycling output. Yonkers Public Works will make home bins available to all residents so you can properly discard food scraps for the purpose of composting. Filled bags can be dropped off at the Recycling Center to later be composted for fertilizer with the help of the County's Environmental Facilities department.

We also plan on expanding our efforts to decrease the use of gas-powered leaf blowers, which emit air and noise pollution. With a new incentive plan, landscapers and homeowners who purchase an electric powered leaf blower can receive up to \$75 in rebates from the City. I don't know about you, but less pollution coupled with quieter mornings and more money in our pocket is a win-win!

When it comes to costs, we all are feeling the effects of skyrocketing energy prices— from lighting your home to gassing your car. Maybe some more than others.

I am proud to say that the City of Yonkers is here to help protect you from the brunt of these increases. The introduction of Westchester Power to our residents this month allows you to lock in a competitive fixed rate on clean energy, for the next 18 months, with options to join or leave the program at any time. We are eliminating the fear of awaiting your monthly Con Ed bill – with the added benefit of knowing you're helping green our electric grid.

Our partnership with Sustainable Westchester goes even further. Starting today, you can enroll in the GridRewards program, which provides residents and small businesses the chance to turn energy savings into cash rewards. Simply download the GridRewards app by April 30th, and when notified by the app of peak energy times, reduce your electricity use. You will receive an average of \$100 in cash rewards at the end of the year. It's as simple as that.

But maybe one of our greatest investments in protecting your wallet this year is acknowledging our evolving power sources. Since 2019, electric car sales have tripled and are expected to rise another 30% by 2025. To offset our reliance on natural gas and encourage the use of cleaner, greener energy, Yonkers is increasing the installation of electric charging stations across the city by another 100. That's real progress.

We also are unstoppable when it comes to the progress made in telecommunications and ensuring all residents have equitable access to it. Our Y Zone initiative launched in October is now providing hundreds of families free broadband along with free computer training and use of a Chromebook. This private public partnership is already proving itself successful and my hope is to soon extend this to every eligible Yonkers resident.

With our growing digital footprint, comes increased challenges in maintaining its safety. In September, the City of Yonkers was hit with a ransomware virus, and while we were able to work through it without paying ransom, we needed to invest approximately \$600,000 over the ensuing 60 days. Going forward, we need to make this a priority in our reoccurring budgets in order to prevent future, more damaging attacks. We also are coordinating with New York State and the Office of Homeland Security to further protect not only city computer systems but those in our hospitals, businesses, educational institutions and homes.

Additionally, we are making significant capital investments in our tech infrastructure. I am happy to report that Altice is finishing up a rebuild of their fiber optic system that will deliver 10GB internet speeds to homes throughout Yonkers. And Verizon has already begun building wireless 5G services. The combination of these two investments make Yonkers one of the most advanced cities for telecommunication in the New York area – making us more attractive to families and businesses.

And we have the numbers to prove it.

As of the 2020 census, Yonkers beat out Rochester to become the Third Largest City in New York State.

Please be sure to add that to your elevator pitch about how great Yonkers is! While I love to brag about our newest claim to fame, it's important to realize it's more than a witty slogan. With 211,000 residents strong, our rising population affords us opportunities to better fund our schools, infrastructure, healthcare and social programs.

However, the 2020 Census didn't reveal anything we didn't already know – and that is Yonkers is undergoing an unprecedented economic revitalization with nearly \$5 billion in private investment in the last 10 years. And despite a global pandemic that paralyzed our nation, Yonkers emerged stronger, and at year's end, proudly boasted a 3.6% unemployment rate – the lowest in over 30 years and the lowest among the State's Big 5 Cities. Proving again, despite all odds, we are unstoppable!

You might think, where do we go from here? Well, if you had asked me that question 10 years ago, I can surely tell you it wouldn't have been that Yonkers would harness this excitement to become a premier film and production destination. From a hand full of production days in 2012 to over 200 in 2021, Yonkers is giving Hollywood a run for its money. With the opening of Lionsgate last month and the completion of Phase 2 expected in 2023, Yonkers will be home to the largest modern production campus in the Northeast, with over one million square feet of production space and 12 giant stages.

And as I always say, we want to make sure that when the tide goes up, the boats go up along with it – and that means jobs for our residents. Under the leadership of Great Point Studios CEO and President Robert Halmi, Lionsgate expects 75% of their new hires to be from Yonkers. And they are well on their way to hit that number. When all is complete, upwards of 2,000 jobs will be created.



And we are not done yet. 2022 will kick off an extraordinary decade of film and production development in our city. Great Point Studios has announced its plans to expand its presence even more and develop the former Rising Ground property in the Ludlow section of the City into an entirely new studio.

While job creation at these studios is impressive, I am more encouraged by the investment the film industry is making in the next generation of filmmakers. This semester, Syracuse University launched an internship program with Lionsgate so their students can be fully immersed in a complete production experience.

But you don't have to be Orange to get hands on experience. Soon Yonkers students will get a shot at the silver screen too. Tonight, it gives me great pleasure to announce that Great Point Studios is partnering with Yonkers Public Schools to create the District's first-ever media, film and television school for grades 6-12. To be located at the Ludlow studio lot, the magnet school will feature specialized curriculum that will provide students the pathway to a career in film and production. Our hope is that by 2024, 500 students will call this new school their own.

And if that's not enough, SIC Film School and Great Point Studios will extend the iPark development to provide further access and resources to the greater Yonkers community. SIC Film School plans to invest in a new state-of-the-art expansion at the Yonkers PAL on North Broadway. Led by former Yonkers resident Hezues R, SIC's mission is to create positive content by empowering youth through community engagement. Students will learn film theory, lighting, sound, story development, art design, postproduction and more -- all relating to social impact content issues. The program will directly reach underserved youth and elevate them by creating a pipeline from the community to the studios, and a bridge to greater opportunities. Our children have to see and understand the change in order to want it for themselves. Along with the PAL and the Yonkers Police, SIC Film School will show them that change.

I want to give special thanks to the new Yonkers PAL Executive Director, Marisol Mancebo, for her efforts in making this collaboration possible and breathing new life into our PAL, which recently reopened under her leadership.

With the promise of more film industry announcements in the coming year, there is no doubt Yonkers is and will be known as Hollywood on Hudson. We are even trademarking our new moniker -- check it out.

Word on the street is that because of our newfound stardom, the City Council is applying for SAG cards.

Yonkers isn't stopping with the film industry. Our long push for the extension of full gaming at Yonkers' MGM Empire City is within reach. Governor Hochul's budget calls for statutory changes that would enable the state to issue the three remaining casino licenses, and that could mean including Yonkers. Full gaming equals thousands of jobs for the building and construction trades and over 10,000 direct and indirect hires, including at least 2,000 direct new hires at Empire City -- resulting in a \$1 billion impact to the surrounding area. Now that's a win!

The benefits for Yonkers are endless. MGM has pledged to institute job training programs for local residents, create thousands of new jobs that pay a living wage and have full benefits, and be a good corporate citizen in every way. Only one thing stands between MGM getting a full casino license now or waiting another year or more, and that is a change in state law. Yonkers stands behind MGM as they seek to move up the schedule. Why should Yonkers wait for new jobs and additional education aid? So, Albany, let's make it happen now. With Governor Hochul's continued support, I am confident we will get it done!

While economic development thrives across the city, we also are ensuring that everyone benefits from it. Along with job creation, we are providing more quality housing that is affordable to all. Early in my administration, I had the vision to assemble tax-delinquent properties and make them available for the development of affordable housing. That is exactly what we are doing at Point Street and Ravine Avenue, where Conifer is building an entirely affordable development. Our Community Development Agency is also constructing a 100% affordable building on Riverdale Ave and Main Street. We also are in the process of building a new senior housing complex on the site of the former Longfellow School as well as ones at 345 McLean Avenue and 178 Warburton. In total, Yonkers will soon add 500 new affordable units for our working families – and that’s in addition to the 1,000 new units we’ve built since 2013.

While the City Council and I are still working to improve upon the 10% existing Affordable Housing Ordinance, we promise you that Yonkers will maintain its status as state leader in affordable housing construction and adopt one of the most comprehensive ordinances in the nation. Nothing can stop us!

Yonkers’ 2022 arts scene remains full steam ahead. Yonkers Arts Weekend returns May 21st and we will celebrate 10 years of the popular YoFi Festival. Plus, our Hudson River Museum’s West Wing is expected to open this fall. The museum’s expansion will provide for even more world-class exhibitions including a new Community and Partnership Gallery where local and emerging artists can display their work. Partnerships with Sarah Lawrence College will welcome a three-year fellow sponsored by the Andrew Mellon Foundation to deepen representation of our Latin-x community here in Yonkers.

We know that art in Yonkers extends beyond the four walls of our museums and galleries. A decade in the making, Enslaved Africans' Rain Garden finally will be erected at its permanent home along the waterfront later this spring. This public art exhibit beautifully displays the untold story of five slaves who once lived at Philipse Manor and the first to be freed in America well before the Emancipation Proclamation. Thanks to our Yonkers artists, we continue to honor our rich history while charting towards its future.

Thanks to the City Council and Councilmember Williams, we also recognize the increasing social responsibility we have to our diverse communities and the message our actions send. Beginning this year, the City of Yonkers will officially celebrate the end of slavery in our country by declaring Juneteenth a city holiday. Juneteenth is believed to be the oldest African American holiday with celebrations going as far back as 1866. It's time ALL of us honor it as well.

When it comes to honoring Yonkers, we continue to provide for those who sacrificed their lives for our own. This year, our Office of Veteran Services enacted a new initiative targeting an often forgotten group of service members – our female veterans. Project Engagement strives to foster camaraderie among our Yonkers female vets, whether it be through mentoring or leadership opportunities. Our hope is that by them sharing their experiences, women can better support each other and make greater strides and advancement in our Armed Forces.

Please join me in recognizing all the veterans joining us tonight. Veterans, please stand so we can thank you for your service.

We know the pandemic left many of us feeling isolated and alone, but probably no more so than our seniors. That's why in partnership with New York State and Westchester County, our Yonkers Office for the Aging devised a program to bridge that gap of isolation. With the use of robotic pets, many of our seniors who suffer from dementia are supplied with these adorable cats and dogs that move, purr and bark. A simple touch and expression is all that's needed to bring comfort, companionship and joy to our seniors.

Tonight, I'd like to take the opportunity to shine a light on some of the great work the men and women of our city do each day that often goes unnoticed. Despite the obstacles the pandemic threw at them, our team was unstoppable. The Department of Human Resources supported over 8,000 active and retired employees during the crisis, navigating telework accommodations, vaccine statuses, weekly COVID testing and the ever-changing guidance. Our Office of Constituent Services came to the aid of hundreds of victims from local fires or other disasters. Hurricane Ida recovery became the full-time job for Constituent Services and our Yonkers Public Library when they hosted FEMA's Disaster Recovery Center at Will Library. Collectively, we assisted nearly 600 households in their efforts to reclaim their homes and lives.

City departments like Finance, DPW, Engineering and Office for the Aging racked up national awards this year for their daily efforts to improve city operations and the quality of life for Yonkers residents. The dedication to their jobs can't always be measured in dollars, but it can be in spirit. Please join me in thanking the over 6,000 devoted employees of the City of Yonkers!

For your commitment and service, the city is adding a new educational reimbursement plan to your benefits. Investing in our employees' continued education means limitless possibilities. The more we invest in our employees, the more they invest in us.

The people of Yonkers continually amaze me, especially as we witness great despair amongst our neighbors here and abroad. There are approximately 10,000 Ukrainian Americans in Westchester, with roughly 25% being immigrants – many of whom call Yonkers their home. The war in Ukraine is unimaginable, and the devastation is beyond comprehension. The images say it all. This is personal to us.

But Yonkers has a unique ability to come together during tough times, and this time is no different. Members of our community, parishioners and clergy of St. Michael's Ukrainian Church, the Ukrainian Youth Center and volunteers like Roman Kozicky are leading the cause in supporting their beloved brothers and sisters abroad. And Yonkers is stepping up to help. Over the last five weeks, we have donated our protective gear, our time, goods and money to our friends. More importantly, we join in prayer for our brethren who choose a path of sovereignty, self-determination and democracy. Let there be no mistake: Yonkers Stands with Ukraine.

Ukrainians, along with so many other ethnic groups, make up the true fabric of who we are in Yonkers. The diversity of our people is the driving force of the positive changes we've made and will continue to see. It's why we are so successful. It's why we top cities across the state in progressive initiatives. We invite all to the table for the necessary conversations that help us identify our needs and eventually celebrate our accomplishments.

Ladies and Gentlemen, there is no stopping Yonkers in our quest for greatness.

It is not in our nature to fail. When we get knocked down, we quickly stand up and push ahead with greater perseverance. The last two years proved the essence of who we are and what we are capable of achieving.

That's why we are unstoppable.

We are unstoppable in improving and rebuilding our schools.

Unstoppable in providing the best in public safety.

Unstoppable in reinventing ourselves and becoming a destination for all.

Unstoppable in diversifying and celebrating who we are.



Unstoppable in leading other cities in every category that improve your quality of life.

And we are Unstoppable in character, determination and progress.

Our journey isn't over yet in Yonkers. We've already done so much together, but I know the full potential of our city is yet to be seen. We will continue to work together to make Yonkers' best days stand before us.

Thank you so much.

May God Bless you, God Bless the people of Ukraine and the City of Yonkers.  
Good night.

